

It all started with our parents in the 1970s: Robert and Janice Kirkpatrick. My siblings, Deanna and Russ, and I were their practice guinea pigs at the house when they were learning. Now, I'm the only one left of the original 5 Kirkpatricks who hasn't yet become a life master, but I'm working on it. This past month at the Gulfport NLM Regional, I was able to make NABC Master thanks to my weekend partners Beth Davis and Janet Slay. These two ladies are the best and are so patient with me when I make mistakes. At the beginning of the tournament, I only lacked .42 Gold--I left with over 6 Gold points for the weekend.

When I think about what this game means to me, there are many associations I have. It's part of my family's roots, it's made me a better person, and it's brought many new friends and bridge family into my life. It's also other things: addicting, exciting, confusing, overwhelming, challenging. Some days, I can't get enough and I hear the clicks of the BBO cards dealing in my head as I open the computer to play just one more round. The days are long between our local MWF games, especially when you're someone who still works full-time, at least until I retire on August 14th. Bridge has been a part of my life on and off since childhood--it's a lifelong friend and something I turn to often. Bridge reminds me of my late father--the master of cards--we lost him in June 2021, but he's with us each time we pick up the cards. I wear one of his bracelets every day and hope it continues to bring me luck as I aim for the next rank.